

Direct Care Worker Training and Testing Program - Now in Force

AHCCCS has instituted training and testing requirements for Direct Care Workers (DCW) who provide direct care services (Attendant Care and Housekeeping) to ALTCS members residing in their own homes. Beginning October 1, 2012, AHCCCS provider agencies of Attendant Care and Housekeeping may only use DCWs who meet the training and testing standards within 90 days of hire, unless the DCW was employed by the agency on or before September 30, 2012. Any entity that wants to train and test DCWs must become an AHCCCS Approved Training and Testing Program.

The following information is intended to guide DCW agencies in qualifying to become an approved training program, maintaining program approval, and how to make changes to programs that have already been approved.

AHCCCS' DCW Webpage (www.azahcccs.gov/dcw)

Please use the AHCCCS webpage as your main source of information regarding the DCW Training and Testing Initiative. The webpage contains information necessary to support DCW agencies serving ALTCS members in their own homes to prepare for and carry out the new training and testing requirements. In addition to the revised policy, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been updated and posted to the website.

Technical Assistance Tools Posted to the AHCCCS Webpage

AHCCCS has created a tool to help provider agencies review the available options and make informed decisions on the best way for them to comply with the new training and testing requirements. [Click here to see the tool.](#)

New technical assistance tools posted to the AHCCCS website include:

- A listing of supplies for skills training and testing. The list outlines the required supplies and additional supplies that would be helpful to have for skills training and testing.
- Guidelines pertaining to the use of the “Principles of Caregiving” curriculum have been posted to the website. The guidelines address protocol for using curriculum whether the Approved Program is using the curriculum as its primary training source or as a foundation for the development of a new product.
- The updated AHCCCS Contractor Operations Manual Policy Section 429 “Direct Care Worker Training and Testing Program Policy” and the AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual Section 1240-B “Direct Care Services (Attendant Care, Personal Care, and Homemaker)” can be found at www.azahcccs.gov/dcw.

Important Information:

- A. How do I become an approved trainer?
- B. How do I maintain program approval?
- C. Where can I find other approved programs?
- D. What if I need to make changes to the approved program?
- E. Where do I find the most recent updates to the training and testing program requirements?
- F. What is AHCCCS working on now?

A. To Become an Approved Training and Testing Program, Entities Must Be:

- An AHCCCS registered agency that provides Direct Care Services (Attendant Care and Housekeeping),
- An entity that is contracted (delegated) by a DCW agency to provide the required training and testing of the DCW agency employee, or
- A community college or an entity that is licensed as a Private Vocational Program by the Arizona Board of Post-Secondary Education.

What are the qualifications for trainers?

Trainers must meet the following qualifications:

- Have passed both the knowledge and skills tests for any curriculum modules they will teach, at the required minimum score, and received a letter from the approved training/testing program (not the trainer's employing agency) attesting to that.
- Have hands-on experience as a caregiver of at least one year.
- Have at least one year of experience teaching groups of adults (any field) or three months (100 plus hours) preparation to become an instructor in direct care.

Approved training programs must verify and maintain evidence that each trainer meets these qualifications. In order to remain a qualified trainer, these individuals must also teach at least two (2) DCW training classes per year.

Training qualifications and protocols: DCW professional development

- DCWs who become trainers do not need to retake the knowledge and skills tests if the original test scores were at or above the level required of a trainer.

Training and testing standard: challenge tests

- A DCW may take a challenge test if they have education or experience similar to what is required for a DCW. The challenge test cannot be repeated. A student who takes the challenge test and fails (either knowledge or skills tests or both) must be trained, and then retake and pass the knowledge and skills tests in order to become a qualified DCW or trainer. The challenge test is similar to the concept of a CLEP test (College Level Examination Program). If you do not pass, you must take the class.

Training and testing standard: 90 day training period

- In the event the DCW's 90 day training period has expired prior to the DCW being trained and passing the knowledge and skills tests, the DCW must stop providing care until the training and testing requirements are met.
- Please note: DCWs shall complete training in CPR, First Aid, and Arizona Administrative Code Title 6, Chapter 6, Article 9, Managing Inappropriate Behaviors ("Article 9") prior to working alone (R6-6-1520 A.2.).

B. Continuing Program Approval

- AHCCCS has instituted a desk audit for the Approved Program's first year in operation. The desk audit will consist of a review of the Approved Program's policies and procedures, training space equipment and supplies and trainer qualifications.
- An onsite audit will be conducted in subsequent years.
- An onsite audit may be conducted, outside of the audit cycle for an Approved Program, by AHCCCS, the Contractor or the assigned auditing Contractor.
- Approved Programs that have been in operation prior to the implementation date will be assigned for an audit in the order of their initial program approval dates.
- Approved Programs established after October 1, 2012, will have their first audit no later than 180 days following their initial program approval date.
- Contractors will perform the audits and are subject to provide a 30-day advance notice of the scheduled review.
- Approved Programs, licensed by the State Board for Private Post-Secondary Education, are exempt from the audit if they submit a signed copy of the Application for Approval for DCW Training and Testing form (Available on the AHCCCS website, www.azahcccs.gov/dcw), attesting that its DCW training and testing program meets the DCW competencies as established in the Principles of Caregiving. This form must be completed and submitted to AHCCCS for initial program approval and annually thereafter.

C. Approved Programs Listing

A listing of Approved Programs is posted to the AHCCCS website. The new listing provides more detailed information to assist:



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- DCW agencies to identify Approved Programs who may be interested in training their workers; and
- Approved Training Programs to identify other Approved Programs who may be willing to train and test their trainers.

D. Changes to the Approved Program

Approved Programs must send in an updated application for approval if any of the following changes are made to the program. AHCCCS will make the changes and send an "updated" initial program approval letter. It is very important that accurate records be kept for auditing purposes. Please send in an updated application for approval if any of the following apply:

- Change to the approved training program's organizational name.
- Change to the "Principles of Caregiving" modules that the approved training program will offer for training and testing.
- Decision by the Approved Program to use a curriculum other than "Principles of Caregiving." The application must be accompanied by a crosswalk to verify the new curriculum meets the required competencies.
- Decision by the Approved Program to become a private vocational training program.
- Approved Program obtains a license from the State Board for Private Post-Secondary Education.

Please note on the updated application that it is a request to update a prior application, and the reason for the request.

E. AHCCCS Updates to DCW Training and Testing Program Requirements

AHCCCS has instituted a listserv to communicate updates regarding the DCW training and testing program requirements. AHCCCS encourages anyone who is interested in the initiative to sign up to receive the regular communication. To subscribe, follow the instructions below:

1. Go to the website (<http://listserv.azahcccs.gov>)
2. Locate and click on the "AHCCCS-DCW-L" list name
3. Locate on the right hand column and click on the "Join or Leave AHCCCS-DCW-L"
4. Follow the instructions to subscribe.

F. What is AHCCCS Working on Now?

Establishing a centralized database for the tracking of DCWs that have been trained and have successfully passed the knowledge and skills tests.

- Progress: AHCCCS has selected a vendor to create the database and is finalizing contracting details to initiate the development. The database is planned for completion by January 01, 2013. The use of the "Verification of Direct Care Worker Testing" form will continue to be the practice to verify the training and testing records of DCWs and trainers until the online database is launched. DCW agencies will be required to input training and testing records on all of their current DCWs into the database. Similarly, Approved Programs will be required to input trainer records. There will be an option in the record to indicate if the DCW is exempt from all or pieces of the training and testing requirements (i.e. DCW was employed with the agency prior to 09/30/12).



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Establishing standardized reporting mechanisms to ensure the participation of all DCW agencies.

- Completed: AHCCCS has instituted a regular reporting process of the ALTCS Contractors to ensure DCW agencies have or will have plans in place by October 1, 2012, to comply with the new training and testing requirements. The first report was provided to AHCCCS on August 1, 2012. DDD is currently contacting agencies to verify that they have in place a mechanism to train DCWs.

Organizing large-scale testing sessions (February 2013) to assist DCW agencies in preparing for the full scale implementation date of the new training and testing requirements.

- Progress: AHCCCS is working with stakeholders to organize testing sessions throughout the state with the voluntary support of Approved Programs. Details will be forthcoming.

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